

HOUSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
HONORS MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON

HON. OLIN E. TEAGUE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 20, 1973

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I had the privilege of attending a dinner given in honor of Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson. The occasion was in conjunction with the dedication of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.

The remarks of James E. Webb on that occasion are recommended to you, Members of Congress, and the public. Mr. Webb was the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration during our late President's term of office. Mr. Webb pointed out in his speech:

In all that her husband accomplished, the participation and contribution of Lady Bird Johnson must be recognized as of the highest order.

We must all concur.

Mr. Webb's remarks follow:

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON AND SPACE

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Johnson, friends, it is a great privilege to have a part in honoring Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson. She has spent her life in partnership with a great man, doing great things. Beyond that, in her own right, she has shown again and again, broad vision and human understanding. Character and wisdom are her hallmarks. She has generously shared her time with a multitude of both great and small figures, who have touched her life as they passed across the stage of current affairs. She is a true citizen of the world. In all that her husband accomplished, the participation and contribution of Lady Bird Johnson must be recognized as of the highest order.

This afternoon, out at Clear Lake, much was said about the appropriateness of re-naming NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center for President Johnson. Much more could be said about the importance to our space efforts of his vision and influence at those turning points that made the real difference between success and failure. As Senate Majority Leader, as Vice President, and as President, Lyndon Johnson was determined that this nation must overcome our early failures and gain the know-how to use space for peace rather than for war.

Someday I hope Mrs. Johnson will put down for future generations her recollections of those moving and important episodes in which she participated.

In 1963 when the Mercury Flights were completed, Vice President Johnson and I were hosts at a luncheon to honor those who had brought about the Mercury successes. Mrs. Johnson was seated next to me. I had not yet come to know her well, but by way of conversation asked what she thought were the Vice President's greatest contributions in his years of public service. Immediately she responded in her characteristic way that she would not give me her views but would give me his. She said that just before World War II, in the crucial national defense decision to adopt the draft, he had pulled a mighty oar along with Speaker Sam Rayburn, to win by one vote in the House of Representatives. She went on to say that as Majority Leader in the Senate in the 1950's he had put his shoulder to the wheel to pass the first major civil

rights legislation to go through that body in something like 100 years; and that in 1967 and 1968, following the Russian success with Sputnik, he had supplied the leadership to put into law the National Aeronautics and Space Act. So the three contributions she mentioned were: national defense, civil rights and space.

That was in 1963, and surely all of us know that in his years as President, Mr. Johnson was responsible for many other important actions. When compared with any of these, however, I believe his determined support for a preeminent U.S. position in space will go down in history. Against the opposition of many scientists and economists he strongly supported the manned space flight part of NASA's program. I am happy that he could live to see our nation land men on the moon and return them to earth.

In 1961 almost my first official act was to recommend to President Kennedy that we invest the funds needed to build the large boosters essential to true space muscle. I also recommended the development of large manned spacecraft. Vice President Johnson gave his eager support. But President Kennedy felt he could approve only a start toward the boosters, and he postponed the spacecraft. In fairness, it must be said that this was during his first few months in the White House when he was beset with many problems. He was not sure of NASA's capability to "deliver the goods," and he was faced with strong differences among his advisors. Some wanted to "kill off manned space flight". But the Vice President had made it his business to know that our universities and industry, working with government could do the job, and that the manned programs were essential. So the first requirement for the Vice President was to convince the President. This he did, with a strong assist from the impact of Gagarin's flight, giving the USSR the first man in space.

Almost immediately after that flight, the Vice President was given the job of laying out a program for the future. He lost no time. He consulted our most knowledgeable experts. He went over his conclusions with leaders of Congress. Based on his report, President Kennedy was able to recommend Apollo to Congress on May 25, 1961. And so it was that his years of work on space, and the hopes and dreams of Lyndon Johnson came to fruition. To show that he was aware of the size and complexity of what we were undertaking, let me read you from a letter which I wrote him a few days before he finished his report:

"You and the President will be placing on . . . (NASA and DoD a task) . . . roughly equivalent to having someone looking down your throat while you were Majority Leader of the Senate and telling you that the future of the country depended on your organizing an effort that would successfully transform the Congress of the United States from a bicameral to a unicameral body within a very short period of time, say two years, and that even if you succeeded the future of the country would still be in jeopardy unless you had obtained passage through the legislative body in the meantime of a whole series of major legislative changes . . ."

The Vice President did not shrink from this mammoth undertaking. He gave the support I was asking for. He gave leadership and guidance to the effort, and made the right decisions at the right time. There is no doubt that the results will reach far into the future through the work that will be done in his name here at the LBJ Space Center.

It is hard to realize that the United States space program is now in its 16th year. We have seen moon landings, pictures from Mars,

observations from Venus, vast improvements in the knowledge and use of weather, and cheaper, more reliable, and vastly expanded world-wide communications systems. We have acquired so much new knowledge of both the earth's environment and its resources that for many years we will be working to put this knowledge to use. President Johnson wanted the United States to have a finest class space team. We now have it.

A good example of the value of this is the fact that Skylab is still in orbit. Crippled by a failure during launch, this space station was repaired by astronauts, working closely with their teammates on the ground. This one repair job saved a two and one half billion dollar investment. The NASA Space team did a job in eleven days that under normal circumstances would have taken from six months to a year. The real question we must now ask ourselves is how we will use this team in the future. To what extent will we give it the support it needs to retain its strength?

The value of saving Skylab goes far beyond dollars. Ultra-violet and X-ray pictures and measurements of the sun, greatly improved by Skylab's large telescopes, are now giving us an order of magnitude improvement in the data our scientists urgently need on the dynamics of the sun's atmosphere. They need this for further study of the forces at work in the earth's atmosphere. With the Skylab data we do not have to wait the eleven years of a solar cycle to benefit from this new knowledge, at a time when our energy crisis and pollution problems emphasize our need to know more about how the sun affects our air and water.

Early in the build-up period for our space efforts, NASA commissioned three studies by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The first was of our nation's major undertaking to build its transcontinental railroads. The second was of how to use indicators of social and economic change to measure the

effects of the space effort being undertaken. The third was of the practical applications of aeronautical and space technology that could be used in other areas of our society. That these studies were undertaken is an example of the broad vision that Lyndon Johnson had for our national space effort. He wanted us to look to the past to see what we could learn from the railroad period; to look to the effects of our work on all aspects of society; and to try to find ways and means through which our space engineering advances could be picked up and used throughout American life.

The director of these studies, Dr. Raymond Bauer of Harvard University, described the possible impacts of the space program in these words:

"They include changes in man's conception of himself and of God; almost incredible consequences of . . . expanded communications via satellite . . . systems; . . . improved short- and long-range weather forecasting; moment-to-moment surveillance of military installations throughout the world; . . . contact with beings higher, lower, or sideways from us; . . . drain on our economy and military strength, or, stimulus to our economy and military strength; competition with the Russians, cooperation with the Russians, or some combination of the two; . . . changes in attitudes toward education and toward stupidity, revolutions in medicine; . . . revolutions in data processing and retrieval; . . . stimulation of our system of higher education, or, disruption . . ." of it.

Those words were written in the build-up period of the 1960's. But to indicate the importance of these concepts today, let me mention a recent visit with the managing directors of one of Europe's largest companies, which employs about as many people all over the world as NASA used at the height of its effort, some 400,000. I asked why this company was investing large sums in an effort to bring the electronics industry of Western Europe into a new computer combine. The answer was that I should be the last person to ask such a question. One director pointed out that a subsidiary had been a sub-contractor to an American company in the Apollo program and had been required to learn how to apply NASA's reliability standards to its production. He pointed out that his company had then adapted this know-how to many areas of its business with important benefits. He said in brief, "What we need in Western Europe at this time is a program that will do for us what the NASA effort did for the U.S. We need to mobilize the kind of total effort throughout our industrial structure that you did in NASA, and we are looking for a way to do it." To those in America who are thoughtlessly trying to further cut back our already reduced space team, this should serve as a danger signal.

It is well known that NASA is now preparing for a joint manned exercise with the Russians. We also know it is working to add to our nation's competence the important new advances promised by the space shuttle project. We know from our earth resources satellite projects that our country's leaders can now make far more intelligent decisions on how to put our limited resources to best use with minimum risk to our society. But we need to go beyond this to address our minds to more basic values. We need to think more than we have about the reaction which President Johnson expressed when he first saw the planet Mars through the camera eye of Mariner IV. His words in 1965 were:

"It may just be that life as we know it, with its humanity, is more unique than many have thought, and we must remember this . . . In the works of space, as in the works of peace, this great nation of ours stands always ready to join with any others—to join with all others—and we are ready as I speak now."

This was a practical world leader's reac-

tion when his hope that we would find evidence of life on Mars was shattered as he looked at the barren landscape of that planet. Running through my mind as I heard him speak these words, and on many occasions since, is the thought that human beings, at least in our solar system, appear to be unique to the earth, and too precious to put in jeopardy.

Physical scientists view our earth and the universe in a quite different way than do social scientists and political leaders. Biologists and physicists have wide differences in their approaches to the development and meaning of life.

Some view the origin of life as the result of a cosmic game of chance—that beginning with a primordial ball explosion, there has proceeded a process of change with probabilities tilted toward the lines of development that human intelligence has already identified.

In this view, over geological time the building blocks of life accumulated in the oceans, forming a sort of nutrient soup in which life eventually originated; that photosynthetic processes using chlorophyll eventually entered upon the scene. These modified the earth's atmosphere until it contained the oxygen on which we are so dependent today. In this view there are hundreds of millions of planetary systems in our galaxy and in the millions of other galaxies, with the probability of there being life elsewhere in the universe a virtual certainty.

However, even if we accept this view, we know that the stars and other galaxies are so unbelievably far away from us, that we are, to all practical purposes, alone in our universe for the time being.

Another group maintains a different view that with the vast new knowledge gained from our space program, with its power to simultaneously look backward at the earth and outward to the space around it, and from many laboratory experiments, we now can view the development of life as more cause than effect—that conditions caused by the development of life reacted on the early earth environment and produced a number of changes that now make the higher forms of life possible. In this view our oxygen-rich atmosphere and its components of water vapor and nitrogen and the minute quantities of ozone in the upper atmosphere are known only on the earth, that the delicate balance among these elements that we now know exists is what makes life possible. Some believe that such a balance could hardly result from chance; that some form of guidance must have been present; in religious terms, a form of creation, by guidance from a supreme power. They point out that the same mechanisms that put in place these elements in the delicately balanced proportions to sustain life could, if they had produced a slightly different balance, made life impossible.

Of one thing, I feel very sure. Our space satellites and probes have given us the capability to get a broad perspective of these phenomena and to better understand the conditions under which life is possible.

The drive which President Johnson, and those associated with him, were able to put into the full development of both science and technology in the United States space program provided a vitality, a scope for imaginative forward thrusting minds, that would not have been possible from a lesser effort. It is now well known that when many minds are opened up through a large undertaking there is an explosion of ideas and intellectual activity which leads far beyond the early thinking. Lyndon Johnson had the vision to foresee this result, and its importance. He saw clearly that man's ability to reach out beyond the limited environment of the earth and into unlimited space would set the stage for momentous events. He saw to it that the U.S. took up this challenge.